

Faculty of Music University of Toronto  
Opera Department  
presents

MOZART'S  
*Così fan Tutte*  
in English

conductor - James Craig  
director - Douglas Craig  
designer - Elsie Sawchuk

Mac Millan Theatre  
Edward Johnson Building

APRIL 4.5.11.12. 1975

8:00 P.M.

THE OPERA DEPARTMENT

presents

# Così fan Tutte *in English*

*Opera buffa in two acts\**

by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte

English text by Ruth and Thomas Martin

*Conductor*

James Craig

*Director*

Douglas Craig\*\*

*Designer & Scenic Artist*

Elsie Sawchuk

*Lighting Designer*

Ron Snippe

*Harpsichord Continuo*

George Brough

*Assistant Conductor*

Michael Evans

*Assistant Director*

Michael Albano

*Chorus Master*

Robert Robinson

## CAST

FIORDILIGI

APRIL 4, 12

Rosemarie Landry

APRIL 5, 11

Barbara Ianni

DORABELLA, *her sister*

Janet Stubbs

Diane Loeb

DESPINA, *maid to Fiordiligi and Dorabella*

Nancy Hermiston

Janet Field

FERRANDO, *engaged to Dorabella*

John Keane

Stephen Young

GUGLIELMO, *engaged to Fiordiligi*

Jonas Vaskevicius

Robert Mang

DON ALFONSO

Douglas McEachen

John Nieboer

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The lobby display has been prepared by staff of the Opera Department and Cheryl Lichter.



## CHORUS

Judith Chertkow  
Susan Gudgeon  
Cheryl Lichter  
Jean MacPhail  
Linda Marcinkus  
Sonia Meroniuk  
Susan Pautz  
Margaret-Anne Richards

Margarita Ruiz  
Belva Spiel  
Caralyn Tomlin  
James Bryant  
Mark DuBois  
Albert Dunn  
Paul Frey

Robert Heard  
George Holborn  
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Daniel Lichti  
Leif Olsen  
Mark Pedrotti  
James Shafer

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Bernard Dolan  
Deborah Kirshner  
Randi Schonning  
Yuriko Takano  
Janet Krause  
George Willms  
Beverly Schroeder  
Nadine Wunder  
Gwen Dunlop

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Rhyll Peel  
Ronald Sandrin  
Sonia Klimasko  
Lorenz Hasler  
Ermanno Florio  
Adele Lappin  
Peter Stryniak  
Janet Sangwine  
Joe Lombardo

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Susan Harris  
Christopher Redsell  
Janet Langley  
Artur Jansons  
Burt Wathen

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Martin Shaver  
Lyndamae Harris  
Christopher Cantlon  
Iona Corber  
John Payzant

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Jack Winn  
Brian Robinson  
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\*\*Concert Master

\*Principal

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*Head Coach-Conductor*

*Vocal Coaches*

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*Wardrobe Supervisor and Cutter*

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Jane Laidlaw-Pyke

Elizabeth Kellogg

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Bill Pyke

Neal Needham

Don McLeod

Yvan LaLiberté

Yvan LaLiberté

Carol Forte

James McManamy

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*Properties Construction*

*Upholstering*

*Makeup and Hairdressing*

*Lighting Board Operator*

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*Production Secretary*

*Librarian*

Kirsten Huehn

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Robert Robinson

\*Directorial Trainee sponsored by Theatre Ontario/Arts Council

## CREDITS

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NEXT EVENT: University of Toronto Concert Choir, Wednesday, April 9, 8:30 p.m., Walter Hall.  
Charles Heffernan, conductor.

NEXT OPERA: Excerpt Programs, May 13, 14, 15, 16, MacMillan Theatre, 8:00 p.m.



modern productions put it back again, of course). This eighteenth century admiration for common sense was perhaps most charmingly expressed in his novel *Candide* by Voltaire, who advised his hero not to be too anxious to jump over the wall, but to cultivate his own garden. This is surely the argument with which to refute the accusation of *Così*'s immorality, since, when all his characters have learnt their lesson, Mozart brings them together at the end to sing

Fortunato l'uom, che prende ogni cosa pel buon verso

e tra i casi, e le vicende da ragion guidar si farà.

(Happy is the man of reason

Who can face the world in season.)

One is in fact constantly reminded in the course of the opera that it is in many ways a product of the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment. When Guglielmo accuses Alfonso of "philosophical nonsense" one hears a faint echo of Diderot and the French thinkers who valued the power of reasoning so highly that they were dubbed "Les Philosophes". And one certainly cannot dismiss as completely frivolous a work which contains so profoundly moving an aria as Fiordiligi's "Per pietà" with its virtuoso horn obbligato.

There are other fascinating eighteenth century hallmarks in *Così*, for example the amalgam of elements of *opera seria* and *opera buffa*, which, earlier in the century, convention would have been kept strictly apart. Thus, it is only natural that, when young ladies of sheltered upbringing are faced with a real life situation which they have previously encountered only in their carefully selected readings from the classics, they express themselves in the wildest metaphors culled from Greek Mythology and in music immediately recognisable as being in the vein of Mozart's own magnificent *opera seria* *Idomeneo*. Despina's songs on the other hand are clearly couched in the dance rhythms of the *opera buffa*. And of course, here is the French Revolution in action; only a few years earlier a maid lecturing and leading her employers astray would never have been countenanced in an aristocratic opera.

In other ways too the opera is thoroughly topical and up-to-date, as, for example, in the mention of Dr. Mesmer, who had recently advanced his theory of animal magnetism and for his pains had been denounced as an imposter only five years before Mozart began writing *Così*.

The music itself displays as wide a spectrum of moods and emotions as are to be found in any opera and exhibits penetrating psychological insight. While the boys and girls are still innocent the boys sing almost exactly similar music and so do the girls, though Ferrando is audibly slightly more romantic than his friend and Dorabella more potentially frivolous than her sister. But in the love scenes all four display clearly individualised musical characteristics, and after Alfonso has won his bet they all achieve musical unity inspired by remorse.

If one feels that Mozart was a little hard on the ladies, it should be remembered that the alternative title to the opera is *La Scuola degli amanti* (The School for Lovers), which implies that the lesson is intended for the boys as well. And finally, there is an autobiographical echo in the piece. Mozart had been deeply in love with Aloysia Weber (cousin of the composer of *Der Freischütz*). She jilted him and he married her sister *faute de mieux*.



## A View of COSÌ FAN TUTTE

by Douglas Craig

*Così fan Tutte* (The Ladies are all alike) was fourth in the succession of Mozart's six great operas, first performed in January 1790, four years after *The Marriage of Figaro* and eighteen months before the *Magic Flute*. His librettist, as for *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, was Lorenzo da Ponte, whose own colourful life, well documented in his autobiography, was liberally sprinkled with incidents which would have served as source material for a racy opera. After a fairly successful start, *Così* disappeared almost completely for over a hundred years, apparently because it was thought to be too immoral, too frivolous or simply too absurd. A bald statement of the plot might perhaps encourage the latter view.

An elderly bachelor philosopher, Don Alfonso, bored by the youthful protestations of two young Neapolitan officers that the girls they are in love with are paragons of virtue, persuades them to accept a wager that he can prove them wrong. He contrives to have them sent to non-existent "wars" and brings them back within a few hours, disguised as "Albanians", with orders to woo each other's girls. The ladies do not penetrate the disguises and under persuasion from their maid Despina (in league with Alfonso) they capitulate, though not before Fiordiligi has contemplated the desperate measure of disguising herself as an officer and going off to join her lover. In the last scene of the opera, they are preparing to marry the "Albanians" until Alfonso intervenes and swiftly restores the *status quo ante* before any more harm is done.

Absurd? Superficially, yes. The fact that the girls fail to see through the many disguises perpetrated against them we must just accept as one of those endearing eccentricities beloved by opera fans. A closer look however suggests that it might not be quite so absurd as it first appears. The eighteenth century was a time of vastly expanding internationalism in art, commerce and politics (did not Mozart himself travel widely?) and the appearance of two richly appavelled gentlemen from the Balkans would not have aroused overmuch comment in a maritime, Mediterranean city. It was in fact a favourite device of contemporary satirists to ridicule the way of life in, say, London or Paris, through the letters of alleged foreign visitors writing home, as did Montesquieu's Persians in his *Lettres Persanes*.

As for women disguising themselves as men, the central situation of one of the most profoundly felt operas ever written — Beethoven's *Fidelio* — presents a woman dressing as a man in order to rescue her husband from prison and this was based on an actual incident which took place during the French Revolution. There are also other authenticated examples of women disguising themselves as soldiers in the eighteenth century when, in any case, it would have been easier to bring off, since women frequently accompanied troops far up into the firing line.

Quite apart from this, it is strange that a century which apparently found nothing odd about magic bullets or oracular dragons or helmets which conferred invisibility (or indeed the astounding coincidences of *La Forza del Destino*) should have found the lesser incongruities of *Così* so intolerable. Perhaps it was an extension of that very love of common sense which is itself in fact the core of *Così* and which, for example, was shared by Rossini, who took the magic out of Perrault's fairy tale *Cinderella* when he turned it into an opera (though most